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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 000303

SIPDIS

FROM U.S. MISSION IN ROME

ISLAMABAD FOR DART
TASHKENT FOR DART
ASHGABAT FOR DART
GENEVA FOR RMA NANCE KYLOH
USUN FOR LSHESTACK
USEU FOR KFULLER AND KDEBLAU

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [AORC](#) [PREF](#) [EU](#) [WFPO](#) [UN](#) [AFGHANISTAN](#)

SUBJECT: CONCERNS VOICED ON THE U.N. WORLD FOOD
PROGRAM'S SOON TO BE RELEASED NEW EMERGENCY OPERATION
FOR AFGHANISTAN

REF: ROME 00001

1. SUMMARY. U.S. MISSION/ROME OFFICERS MET ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 17 WITH THE U.N. WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP) ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (AED) AND DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, MOHAMED ZEJJARI TO EXPRESS U.S. CONCERNS ABOUT THE SOON TO BE RELEASED NEW EMERGENCY OPERATION (EMOP) FOR AFGHANISTAN. THE PRIMARY POINTS CENTERED AROUND A LACK OF SUPPORTING DATA FOR THE PROPOSED PROGRAMS AND THE NEED TO CONTINUALLY MONITOR THE EFFECTS OF FOOD AID AND MAKE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS TO WFP PROGRAMS. WFP INCORPORATED THE SUGGESTED ADDITIONS INTO THE EMOP WHICH IS TO BE RELEASED IN THE COMING DAYS. WFP REPORTED THAT U.S. REQUESTED SPOT-CHECKS TO THE VAM FINDINGS ARE PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND

2. WFP PROVIDED THE U.S. MISSION/ROME AND USAID/DCHA/FOOD FOR PEACE OFFICE (FFP) WITH AN ADVANCE COPY OF WFP'S NEW EMOP, WHICH BEGINS ON APRIL 2002 AND ENDS DECEMBER 31, 2002. THE VERSION PROVIDED WAS DATED JANUARY 8. AFTER READING THE DOCUMENT, THE U.S. MISSION/ROME AND USAID/FFP HAD SOME CONCERNS. ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 17, U.S. MISSION/ROME OFFICERS LAVELE AND DAVIS MET WITH WFP'S ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (AED) AND DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, MOHAMED ZEJJARI, AND WFP'S CHIEF OF THE OFFICE OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (OHA), FRANCESCO STRIPPOLI, TO REVIEW U.S. CONCERNS.

CONCERNS VOICED

3. SENIOR EMERGENCY COORDINATOR (SEC) DAVIS RELAYED TWO PRIMARY CONCERNS AND LEFT BEHIND A MEMO THAT OUTLINED MORE DETAILED COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT EMOP. THE PRIMARY POINTS WERE THE FOLLOWING:

A. WFP PROPOSES A VARIETY OF PROGRAMS IN THE NEW EMOP. SOME ARE REVIVED PROJECTS FROM PRE-SEPTEMBER 11; OTHERS ARE A CONTINUATION OF CURRENT RELIEF ACTIVITIES; AND SOME ARE COMPLETELY NEW. THESE PROJECTS ARE OUTLINED, HOWEVER, WITH LITTLE TO NO SUPPORTING DATA TO JUSTIFY THE NEED. STATEMENTS ARE MADE ABOUT HIGH MORTALITY RATES, HIGH MALNUTRITION RATES, AND THE NEED FOR CONTINUED FOOD AID, BUT NO ACTUAL DATA IS PROVIDED. ONE WOULD SURMISE FROM READING THE DOCUMENT THAT ONLY ANECDOTAL INFORMATION EXISTS. THE VULNERABILITY AND ANALYSIS MAPPING (VAM) UNIT HAS ACCUMULATED A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF DATA, AND EVEN THOUGH SEVERAL MONTHS OLD, NONE OF THAT DATA IS UTILIZED. THE PROGRAMS MAY INDEED BE VERY MUCH NEEDED IN AFGHANISTAN, BUT THEY SHOULD BE SUBSTANTIATED.

B. THERE IS NO MENTION AS TO HOW THE AFGHANISTAN FOOD SECURITY UNIT (AFSU, FORMER VAM) FINDINGS WILL BE FOLDED INTO THE PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES OR HOW PROGRAMS MAY BE ADJUSTED EACH MONTH ON THE BASIS OF THE AFSU'S FINDINGS. AND NO MENTION IS MADE OF TRACKING THE IMPACT OF FOOD AID ON THE MARKETS TO ENSURE THAT FOOD AID IS NOT HAVING A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY.

4. ZEJJARI TOLD THE OFFICERS THAT MANY OF OUR DETAILED CONCERNS HAD ALSO BEEN SHARED BY HIM AND HE HAD TWICE REQUESTED RE-WRITES TO THE EMOP SINCE THE JANUARY 8 VERSION. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT SHARE THE MOST-RECENT VERSION WITH THE OFFICERS, HE DID READ PARTS THAT CONFIRMED THAT SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES HAD TAKEN PLACE.

5. ZEJJARI WAS VERY SUPPORTIVE OF THE NEED TO ADD

LANGUAGE TO THE EMOP ABOUT POINT B ABOVE, HOWEVER HE ARGUED THAT PROVIDING ALL THE DATA (POINT A) TO JUSTIFY WFP'S PROGRAMS WOULD MAKE THE EMOP DOCUMENT TOO LONG. THE SEC COUNTERED THAT THERE IS A HAPPY MEDIUM BETWEEN NO DATA AND AN OVERWHELMING QUANTITY. COPIES OF THE MEMO WITH THE DETAILED POINTS WERE LEFT WITH HIM AND STRIPPOLI AND HAVE BEEN SENT TO USAID/FFP AND USAID/DART/ISLAMABAD.

SPOT-CHECKING THE VAM RESULTS

16. AS RELAYED IN REF TEL, MISSION OFFICERS HAD ENCOURAGED WFP TO CONDUCT "SPOT-CHECKS" OF THE VAM RESULTS IN A FEW DISTRICTS OF AFGHANISTAN THAT ARE CURRENTLY ACCESSIBLE. IN THE MEETING, THEY ASKED ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF THIS EFFORT.

17. ZEJJARI STATED THE VAM UNIT HAD RECENTLY BEEN EXPANDED BY THREE STAFF. THE UNIT IS TAKING JANUARY TO PREPARE AND DO RESEARCH, AND IN FEBRUARY THE FIELD WORK WOULD BEGIN. THE FIELD WORK IS TO INCLUDE THE REQUESTED SPOT CHECKS. USAID/DART CONTINUES TO FOLLOW THIS ISSUE WITH WFP STAFF IN ISLAMABAD.

PROGRESS MADE

18. ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 18, U.S. MISSION OFFICERS TALKED WITH ZEJJARI DURING THE LUNCH AT WFP WITH CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION KOLBE. HE SHOWED THE SEC WHERE WFP ALREADY HAD INCORPORATED THE PRIMARY CONCERNS INTO THE EMOP. WFP IS HOPING TO RELEASE THE NEW EMOP CONCURRENTLY WITH THE TOKYO PLEDGING CONFERENCE ON AFGHANISTAN.

19. MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. HEILEMAN